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TO THE CHRISTIAN WATCHMAN.

VOLUME XIV.

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BOSTON, FRIDAY, JANUARY

Religious Miscellany.

For the Watchman.

CHRISTIAN MINISTRY.—NO. 8.

SETTLEMENT IN THE MINISTRY.

In my last number, I stated that I should endeavour to show, in my next, that *the pastoral relation should not be limited to any specific time, but continue till the providence of God evidently points to its dissolution.* In the discussion of this subject, I shall present a few thoughts only, and commend it to the candid attention of my readers. I have already stated some of the evils which I suppose must result from assuming the pastoral relation with the express stipulation that it shall continue during the life of the pastor, and also the evils connected with limiting it to any specific time. The subject, therefore, will not be again called up, or be particularly considered. Within my own knowledge, some pastors have limited the time of their settlement to a certain number of years, either because they wished themselves, or because it was desired by the people. But in no one of these instances have I seen any good resulting from such an arrangement; on the other hand, the circumstance has generally been regretted by one or the other of the parties before the expiration of the specified time. I remember an instance of a church and people suffering very essentially from engaging a man to remain with them as pastor for *a single year only.* For he had not been with them the sixth part of the time, before it was manifest that his continuance with them another week would be a decided injury to the church and the interests of Zion in the place. But, having engaged him to remain for a year, they scarcely knew how to effect an object which seemed to them desirable. And it was with difficulty that he was induced to leave a few months before his time expired. In relation to this case indeed, I confessed, that a part of the evil is to be attributed to a want of more time and deliberation on the part of the people, before the decision was made. Still there is danger of the existence of something of the kind, where such an arrangement is entered into, which teaches at least the inexpediency of it. In the settlement of pastors, if no particular time be specified, the church will not be under obligation to retain them any longer than a regard to the interests of truth and religion requires. If an individual therefore has imposed upon the people, by appearing at first what he is not afterwards found to be, he may be removed at once, and the cause of Christ suffer little or no injury by his means. If, when a church are about to give an individual an invitation to become their pastor, there exist doubts in regard to his being adapted to the place, it is far more speakably better to require a longer probation than to limit the time of his settlement, thus binding the people, or,